

THE ISNEG LIFE CYCLE

131

many details as possible, although I am far from claiming that my study about Isneg religion and morality has so far been exhaustive or that my knowledge of these subjects cannot be improved upon. A whole lifetime would scarcely be sufficient to disentangle all the intricate knots, the more so that, especially as regards religion, the Isneg are sometimes far from logical in their reasoning.

In religious instruction the *dorarákit* or shaman plays the dominant rôle, as it is she who conducts religious ceremonies, and it is she through whom the spirits and the souls of the dead are supposed to communicate with man. Now let us see in how far the shaman imparts formal instruction, and in how far young people have to learn by merely looking on.

The *dorarákit* directly teaches her pupils by explaining to them the meaning of the rites and ceremonies, at the time of some *sáy-dm* or other sacrifice accompanied by *maxanito*, and almost exclusively on such occasions. Her pupils at the time are first of all the young *dorarákit*, who have been chosen and consecrated mostly when still in their infancy, and secondly all members of the younger generation who are willing to listen. Consequently this kind of teaching is done while the ceremonies in question are under way and it is illustrated by their performance. It is not the place here to enter into details about the ceremonies just referred to; it will suffice to say that the *sáy-dm* is a kind of public sacrifice in which dogs and pigs are offered to the spirits, and that *maxanito* refers to the action of the shaman at the time she is supposed to be possessed either by a spirit or by the soul of a deceased person, who speaks through her mouth. In this the Isneg shaman differs from the Kankanay one; the latter is usually supposed merely to communicate with beings of the other world, to talk to them, while in the case of the Isneg the spirit is supposed to talk through the shaman. Besides, a Kankanay shaman plays a very secondary rôle: she is mostly of use only at the time of sickness, when she has altercations with the spirits who are supposed to cause the disease or when she goes around to look for the *ab-ablik* (Kankanay) or soul, which a sick person is supposed to have lost; while sacrifices, whether public or private, are presided over by men. Let this be enough for the time being.

I just stated that the Isneg shaman explains the meaning of religious rites and ceremonies to her pupils. The manner of conducting these ceremonies, however, is not formally taught: in this respect a young *dorarákit* is a mere looker-on. When the time comes for the

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"THE ISNEG LIFE CYCLE

207

fere in the least: consequently she does not *mazanito* or impersonate the spirits of the dead, and remains completely in the background, if indeed she happens to be present. And the same is true with reference to the *okit* or marriage ceremony: here also there is a feast and a killing of animals, but no *mazanito*. The Isneg probably believe that spirits and ghosts have nothing to do with something that is exclusively the business of living human beings, as an *amómán* or betrothal and an *okit* or marriage undoubtedly are.

Nevertheless it may happen that the *amómán* takes place at the time a *sáy-ám* sacrifice is in progress at the house of the girl, and then of course the *mazanito* will be performed as usual, as no ceremonies connected with the customary *sáy-ám* are ever omitted; but this *mazanito* will generally be performed before the arrival of the *patúgán*, and in any case it has nothing to do with the *amómán*. The only reason why an *amómán* slightly interferes with the ceremonies of the *sáy-ám* is the fact that on such coincidences the female spirit *Sisina* has to be especially remembered. Two coconut shells, one partly filled with *bási* (a beverage obtained from sugar cane) and another one partially filled with dog's blood, have to be put down in her honor somewhere along the path that leads to the spot where the women draw water for drinking purposes. This is done in order to induce *Sisina* to look after the young couple and to see to it that both are of one mind and avoid all disputes and altercations.

The *amómán*, at least if it has resulted to the satisfaction of everybody, does not interfere in the least with the usual nocturnal visits of the groom to the house of the bride. He continues to *maral-allá* as before, that is, to sleep with her, and even to have coitus if they so desire. Actually in several districts they even translate the term *mazomómán* by that of *mazatáwa*, "to marry"; and in this case, of course, the subsequent ceremony of the *okit*, after which the two young people are allowed to live together, must in their minds have lost most of its significance.

B. WEDDING RITES AND CUSTOMS

A certain period of time always elapses between the *amómán* and the real marriage or *okit*, but it is impossible to determine exactly its length. In some cases a month is sufficient for all interested parties to prepare themselves properly for this most important ceremony; in others, even a whole year may pass by before the marriage finally takes place.

776 The *Danag* live in trees and act like fairies. If
[824] a tree is cut down and it does not fall, a *Danag* inhabits that tree. *Danags* enjoy playing practical jokes. If something awkward happens on the way, a *Danag* did it. Or sometimes, when some priestess is calling her *anito*, a *Danag* will show up instead.

782 The usual method used to gain the favor or help of an *anito* is to give him a feast. This may vary in name, size, details, and extent, according to the occasion and wealth of the party who gives the feast. The
796 general procedure; however, at a feast is about as follows:
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[791] The relatives and family giving the feast gather in the house one evening while the priestess, *durarakit*, performs a ceremony in which she calls the suitable *anito* and invites it to enjoy the feast. She spreads a mat near the door, places on it a bundle of unthreshed rice, some *buyo*, with possibly other articles, and ties a small chicken near by. The priestess stands on the mat and, to the cadence of the drum and bronze gongs, side shuffles her feet and waves her extended arms, at the same time calling in an old chant for the *anito* to come to the feast. In a few minutes her eyes dilate and she begins to tremble in a trance. The *anito* has come. She continues talking to it, telling it to be happy and to please help as desired. After a while she comes out of her trance and starts placing *buyo* with leaves and lime, together with grass bundles, on the jars of *basi* and on the animals which are to be killed. (Dogs and pigs are eaten only at feasts.) The *durarakit* performs this that there may be peace at the feast.

796 smallest feast is the *pespes*, given at the beginning of harvest, or for a sick child. Only a chicken or maybe, a pig is killed. After eating, the people go to the field and work until quite dark. A coconut is divided and half left for the field. The other half is eaten on arriving home.

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[753] A *coglot*, given to an *anito* for the recovery of a sick person, deserves further mention. If one of the family becomes sick, they think that the spirit of the sick one has wandered away and been caught by some *anito*. They call for one or more priestesses according to their wealth. This priestess holds a consultation to discover, either which *anito* is keeping the spirit, or which *anito* to ask to go and take the spirit away from the evil *anito*, and thus bring the sick back to health.

[757] Upon deciding which *anito* to call, they tie a live pig at the door, and the priestess calls the *anito*. Then she touches the patient, sometimes applying native herbs, oil, or lime on the parts affected. The dog or pig is then killed, and the priestess prays the *anito* to take the spirit of the animal instead of the spirit of the sick person.

• [791] The next morning the patient gives the priestess the beads, plates, *aliwa*, and all the articles used by her in the ceremony.

787 Auguries are practised by observing the flight and call of birds.

The various calls of the *awanac* are important. Ten different calls are distinguished and are classified as *mulad*, foretelling good fortune; or *umgad*, foretelling misfortune.